

MEMORIAL

OF

IMPORTING MERCHANTS OF THE CITY OF ST. LOUIS,

PRAYING

To be relieved from the operations of certain restrictions imposed by the existing tariff on merchandise imported into that city through the port of New Orleans.

MARCH 16, 1848.

Referred to the Committee on Commerce, and ordered to be printed.

To the Senate and House of Representatives in Congress assembled :

The undersigned, importing merchants residing and doing business in the city of St. Louis and State of Missouri, respectfully represent, that they labor under great disadvantages compared to those in similar business upon the seacoast, owing to the unnecessary expenses to which they are subjected at New Orleans, by the existing revenue laws and regulations ; that by these laws, when wishing to import, they execute a bond for the duties and deliver it to the collector at this port, and send a duplicate thereof to an agent, to be placed in the custom-house at New Orleans, at which place the duties are computed, and the entry, invoice, and duplicate bond are then sent by mail to the collector here, in order to the collection of the money ; at the same time, the goods are placed upon a steamboat, the master of which makes a manifest of them, and takes an oath to deliver it to the collector here before discharging any portion of his cargo, and to hold the dutiable cargo subject to his orders. And your memorialists further represent, that, for some reason connected with these details, their goods are removed to the public warehouse at New Orleans ; a removal attended with an expense which oftentimes exceeds the freight upon them from Europe ; an expense as unnecessary as it is unreasonable, and attended with damage to goods, as well as all the trouble and delay and expense attending the sending of bonds and invoices to New Orleans, to go through the formality there of being looked at in the custom-house, and then to be returned here by mail to go through the reality of collection, which might be saved by making this a port of entry. But the most grievous effect which results from the existing section of law, which supposes that goods have been entered at New Orleans which are yet to be entered here, is, that your memorialists often have to pay duties upon goods that are lost upon the voyage between this port and New Orleans, a voyage more destructive of property than that across the ocean.

Assuredly, there is not more justice in thus making your memorialists the unpaid insurers of the government taxes upon goods ascending the Mississippi river, than there would be in exacting such a penalty from merchants on the seaboard whose goods were lost in the ocean. Your memorialists having become sensible of these burdens by experience, have, many of them, found it more economical and safe to employ agents at the seaports, and to remit, and through them to pay the duties there instead of paying them at this port; an inconvenient and expensive alternative which it was the object of existing laws to obviate. They do not ask that any of the existing precautions for the safety of the public revenue should be dispensed with. The oath and manifest required by the custom-house officer at New Orleans from the master of the steamboat, under existing laws, on which dutiable goods are shipped, experience has shown to be all that is necessary to secure their safe delivery to the custom-house officer at this port, and secure the government in the collection of its just dues. If it be deemed advisable to require a heavier bond from all masters of boats in the New Orleans trade, a heavier security might be exacted of them for the more faithful protection of the collection of the revenue.

Your memorialists, in fact, say that the proceedings in relation to the entry at New Orleans subserve no good purpose whatever to the government, and are only attended with an expense of fees of public officers and cost of private agents, and frequent damage and destruction to goods, which are ruinous to a fair competition with the merchants on the seaboard on the part of those in the interior; and the existing laws and regulations have therefore the effect of unequal and unjust legislation. Your memorialists therefore pray your honorable bodies to modify the laws in the particulars above specified; and they will ever pray, &c.

Giles F. Filley,
Child, Farr, & Co.,
O. D. Filley,
Burtis & Brother,
L. Perchmann,
Franklin & Perry,
Stettheimer & Brother,
P. Wilson & Co.,
Per Hy. Glover,
Devillers & Darmenton,
Farwell & Co.,
Jas. Masterson,
Isaac Lockwood,
Godfrey Schultz,
L. Braan,
K. Markinjer & Co.,
C. & M. Noonan & Co.,

Brownlow & Homer,
Wolff, Hoppe & Speck,
Dolnch, Peltoun & Co.,
N. E. Janney,
Chouteau & Vallé,
Gaty, McCune & Glasby,
John Merrick,
H. Bridge & Brother,
Edwin Chaffin,
Julius Morisse & Co.,
Fr. Dings & Co.,
A. & E. Hildenbraurt,
Shapleigh, Day & Co.,
Angelrod, Eggers & Bartle,
Thomas Aspinall,
Wilson & Brother,
Havral, Sherman & Co.